

to ER

May 26, 50.

R.W.H.

Dear Sir:

*I thought the newspaper
clippings might be of interest
to you.*

25X1

Lincoln



Stewart Alsop

Cold War Oracle

WASHINGTON

MAY 25, 1950

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1950



Hillenkoetter

HOW MANY ATOM BOMBS do the Russians have? How many will they have in 1952? In 1954? What will happen when Stalin dies—and, incidentally, what is the real state of Stalin's health?

• How much resistance will there be in the satellite countries if war comes, and can resistance be promoted in time of peace?

How strong is the Communist fifth column in France? In Norway? In Indonesia?

• Are the Soviets ready to risk war over Berlin?

Such questions are almost unanswerable. Yet American policy must be based on a shrewd guess at the answers.

The chief guesser, the oracle whom the makers of policy must consult, is

the director of the Central Intelligence Agency. That is why the directorship of the CIA is one of the most crucial, and the most agonizingly difficult, of cold war jobs.

The present oracle is Adm. Roscoe Hillenkoetter. He has done a good job under exceedingly difficult circumstances. His worst troubles have arisen from the fact that he is a mere rear admiral, a fairly low order of animal in the forest of Washington brass.

At any rate, Hillenkoetter was loaned to the CIA by the Navy, and his three-year tour of duty has come to an end. He is therefore preparing to hand on the poisoned chalice to someone else, and thankfully abandon the Washington bear-pit for the tranquility of ocean service.

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AT PRESENT, THE MOST LIKELY receiver of the poisoned chalice seems to be either Gen. Bedell Smith, the able former ambassador to Moscow, or the equally able deputy director of ECA, William Foster.

Intelligence estimates deeply affect every aspect of foreign and defense policy. Intelligence is thus a potent weapon in the hands of any official intent on promoting his favorite policy. This is why an intelligence agency inevitably becomes the center of bitter, no-holds-barred warfare within the government.

This is also why, in the tension brought on by Defense Sec. Louis Johnson's empire-building proclivities, the State Department is determined that the new CIA chief shall not be a creature of the Pentagon.

Indeed, any secret intelligence head must be wholly independent of everyone but the President. It is absolutely essential that he have the personal stature, rank, and ability to defy when necessary the wrath of any and every official in Washington, up to and including Cabinet rank.

Both Smith and Foster are considered to have this quality of independence, which is one reason why their names stand high on the lists of possible CIA chiefs, which are now being passed around.

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OTHER NAMES have of course been discussed. Former Undersec. of State Robert A. Lovett, it is generally agreed, would make an ideal appointment. But Lovett has let it be known that nothing on earth would persuade him to take the job.

William Jackson, a New York lawyer with the intelligence experience, has been tentatively considered. So has the able ambassador to France, David Bruce, and one or two others. But Bruce is badly needed in his present post, and most of the others are probably disqualified. So the finger points, for the present, at either Foster or Smith.

The final decision will rest with Mr. Truman. In the nature of things, a secret intelligence chief must be very much the President's man.

Moreover, Mr. Truman himself is deeply interested in secret intelligence matters. He regularly studies the special reports prepared for him by the CIA as his day's first order of business, and he frequently orders a special briefing by the intelligence chief.

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THE APPOINTMENT IS OBVIOUSLY of immense importance at this stage in the cold war. For the role of CIA will not henceforth be confined to the passive collection of secret intelligence. Clearly the subject is not one for detailed public discussion. But it is obvious on the face of it that the Soviet Union has heretofore enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the twilight zone of clandestine subversion and organized resistance.

It is equally obvious that the Soviet system itself, with far graver real weaknesses than the Western world, is by no means invulnerable to this sort of pressure.

The new CIA chief will have the task of breaking the Soviet monopoly, a task which must be done if the cold war is to be won.

The CIA head will thus become one of the key figures in the conduct of the cold war. Whoever is offered the post, and is so foolhardy as to accept it, will have his job cut out for him.